Criminal cases against politicians

996. DR. V. MAITREYAN: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of criminal cases pending against the present politicians holding posts, as well as former politicians across the country, State-wise;

(b) the action being taken to dispose of the pending cases with clear verdicts;

(c) whether it is a fact that many cases are pending for a long time and they are not coming up for hearing due to manipulations in the court procedures; and

(d) if so, the steps being taken to monitor the pending cases for speedy justice?

THE MINISTER OP LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) to (d) The Department of Justice does not maintain data on the number of criminal cases pending against politicians. However, during the last year, the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice while studying the matter of 'Electoral Reforms' is seized of the matter relating to charge-sheet files against sitting MPs/MLAs in different competent courts of law. In order to provide information to the said Committee, all State Governments and UT Administrations were requested to provide the same. Some States/UTs have furnised the requisite information. As per available information, there are around 1300 cases pending against sitting MPs/MLAs in various courts, as on 31.3.2007. Further, CBI has reported that it is investigating around 65 such cases.

As regards manipulations in the court procedures, it may be mentioned that the judiciary is independent and as such the Government cannot interfere with the functions of the ' judiciary.

The dispoal of criminal trials in the courts takes considerable time and that in many cases trials do not commence for as long a period as 3 to 5 years after the accused was remitted to judicial custody. Large number of persons accused of criminal offences have not been able to secure bail for one reason or the other and have to languish in jail as under-trial prisoners for years. To reduce the delay in the disposal of criminal trials and appeals and also to alleviate the suffering of under-trial prisoners, the concept of plea-bargaining was introduced in the Code of Criminal Procedure 1973.

Grant-in-aid for evening courts

997. SHRI KANJIBHAIPATEL: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to
state:

(a) whether Government intends to introduce the grant-in-aid scheme for assistance to State Governments for evening courts, etc. for speedy trial and disposal of cases;

(b) if so, when the scheme is likely to be implemented; and

(c) the expected amount of grant-in-aid, per court?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) No, Sir.

(b) **and** (c) Do not arise.